

# THE HISTORIC EVIDENCE & THE HISTORIC TRANSFORMATION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

## I INTRODUCTION

### **Lack of adequate Evidence of the Historical Jesus:**

Based on only a piece of documentation (fragment of Oxyrhynchus) which is non canonical gospel though written one and a half century after that time he is said to have lived.. [JE 21-22]

While of the works of the great Roman historian Tacitus, there exists merely a copy of a single manuscript dating from about the 12<sup>th</sup> century, of canonical works attesting to Jesus' existence there are some 274 vellum manuscripts, brothers and sisters of *Sinaiticus* dating from between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, and no less than 88 papyrus fragments datable between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and fourth centuries. this quite independent of the non-canonical material. [JE 31]

To many the historical Jesus did not exist. The basis of this argument is to be found in the writings of Paul.

Paul wrote writings of at least some of the letters attributed to him in the New testament, and these writings predate the canonical gospels. But the important thing is that they are ignorant of any details of Jesus' earthly life. Paul does not name Jesus' parents, where he was born where he lived etc...no parables no miracles of Jesus

(even denies any miracles by Jesus), no trial, no mention of Jerusalem as place of his execution.

Not even the gospels give us the smallest crumb of information about what he looked like. With the exception of the forty days and nights in the wilderness (of which we are told virtually nothing) everything described in the gospels could be compressed into three weeks which leaves by far the greater part of Jesus' life unrecorded.

The date and the year of his birth is unknown. The two gospels which give some account about his birth, Matthew and Luke, the nativity stories contradict each other in important particulars:

In Matthew news of Jesus' impending birth is conveyed to Mary's husband in a dream, In Luke directly to Mary by the Angel Gabriel'. In Luke Jesus' parents had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census. In Matthew they lived in Bethlehem already and were only obliged to leave later because of an incident (Herod's killing of new born') which has no historical corroboration.

In Luke Jesus is presented as God's son by Mary, his ancestry is illogically traced back to King David via his human father Joseph.

While Matthew gives Jesus' genealogy via the male line, he provides a list of antecedents so different from those in Luke that even Joseph's father appears with a different name - Jacob instead of Heli. In this light the accounts of nativity are doubtful.

A similar uncertainty surrounds Jesus' death because of gospel contradictions. According to the four canonical gospels and the Roman historian Tacitus Jesus' death occurred during the governorship of Judea by Pontius Pilate, whose term of office is known to have been between 27-36 AD. But when the three synoptic gospels tell us that Jesus' Last Supper was a Passover meal, while according to John the day of crucifixion itself was Passover Preparation Day. This is important because the Passover always falls on 15 Nissan and all gospels agree that the day immediately after the crucifixion was a Sabbath, so we cannot be sure whether we are looking for a year in which 14 Nissan fell on a Thursday or a Friday.

The early second century writer Suetonius described Jews of Rome rebelling at the instigation of 'Chrestus', while his almost contemporary historian Tacitus that Christians were blamed for Nero's fire and that Christians founder 'Christ' had been executed by Pontius Pilate. Both historians were clearly distant from the original event.

Dates have been offered 30, 33, 27,36 AD but we simply do not know.

Though Tacitus mentioned him but close scrutiny reveals that his reference is not very clear or specific. Tacitus merely spoke of early Christians whose 'ordinator' Christ has been executed by Tiberius. (note he uses the word Christ as if it was his name

By suggesting that Jesus was born at the time of Quirinius, the author of the Luke gospel appears to give historical detail. But Quirinius census took place in 6AD incompatible with information in Mathew 2:1 that he was born during the reign of kind Harod who died in 4 BC.

Matthew may have simply invented the star story, inspired by Balaam's 'star from Jacob' of numbers 24:17

[The Talmud clearly testifies to the historical existence of Jesus, presenting his name in its original Aramaic form ( Jeshu).

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem 44 ]**

### **Aim of the Gospels:**

Scholars today commonly concede that the Gospels were written to prove that the historical Jesus was in fact the expected Israelite Messiah, or Christ, rather than provide an accurate biography. It is for this reason that it is replete with references to prophecies from the Israeli Scriptures -the Old Testament.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem 7,34**

## **II**

### **Jesus: The Historical Evidence?:**

There is enough evidence outside the Christian scriptures that Jesus Christ existed. But his figure in the Gospels is inconsistent and the aim of the Gospel writers was to show that Jesus was the expected Israelite Messiah rather than to write a biography.

Paul, in AD 40, believed that Jesus whom he never met before and prosecuted his followers, was the one and only Christ and the Son of God. And he began to call him Jesus Christ. **Conspiracy in Jerusalem (1, 8)**

In the canonical and apocryphan (false, obscure in origin and unapproved) literature of the sect not on line was written by anyone who could credibly claim to have seen Jesus in the flesh. The oldest documents are ostensibly the Epistles of Paul, the earliest of which date from about 51 A.D. Paul himself never saw Jesus except as an apparition who appeared to him in a seizure... In the matter of interpolation the Pauline epistles are not above suspicion... but these letters tell only of a cult in which the crucified Jesus figures as the supreme purificatory sacrifice. Though information on the matter may have been current, they contain no reference to Jesus' birth, to his miracles or to his ethical teachings, even though the teachings are subsequently made to appear as the *raison d'être* of the movement, while the miracles are advanced as proof of Jesus's divinity.

All that can be recovered from Paul, the source closest to the namesake of Christianity in time, is that Jesus has quit the right hand of God and come to earth in order to serve as a supreme sacrifice for all men, that he had been crucified and had ascended again unto heaven, and that redemption from sin could be gained by Jew and Greek regardless of circumcision, through the rite of baptism. If Paul knew more than this, he was not interested in the information, and his accounts offer no confirmation of the elaborate details which are recorded in the latter gospel narratives. **(HS 180)**

### **Jesus' Parents**

In Mark (6:3) he is referred to as the carpenter, in Matthew (13:55) as the carpenter's son.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem ( 39-40)**

### **Virgin Birth:**

In his surviving epistles, Paul does not explicitly attribute virgin birth to Jeshu. In one instance however, he does make a subtle allusion to the matter by speaking of the man as the son of the human mother (literally, "made of a woman" **Galatians 4:4**), without mentioning a father. This indicates that Paul knew the tradition concerning Issa as the virgin-born son of Mary but preferred not to ascribe this tradition explicitly to Jeshu whom he knew to be the normally born son of Joseph the Carpenter.

Paul preferred a model to his Christ after a figure of a more esoteric and mystical tradition.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem ( 69-71)**

### **Illegitimate Son ?**

According to the Jewish Talmud Jesus (strictly "*Jeshu*" was the illegitimate son of a Roman soldier called Panther who babbled in magic gathered disciples round him caused a popular stir and was hanged on the eve of the Jewish Passover. Ben Pantera meaning the son of Pantera meant to some scholars as the Ibn -el-*Labwah* (Arabic insult ). The Talmud could be a testimony of the historical Christ- in fact of Jeshu).

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (41-42)**

## **Jesus' Real Father**

According to a widespread early Jewish story, Jesus was the illegitimate son of a Roman soldier called Pantera. The name was thought to be an invention until this a first century tombstone was discovered in Bingerbrück, Germany. The inscription on it read: "Tiberius Julius Abdes Pantera of Sidon, aged 62, a soldier of 40 years' service, of the 1<sup>st</sup> cohort archers, lies here". The tombstone does happen to date from the appropriate early Roman Imperial period.

[JE 63]

### **Jesus' Brothers:**

Matthew 13:55-56

Mark 6:3, 6:1-6, 3:31-35

Luke 2:4

John 7:2

Ghalatians 1:20

Acts 1:14

1 Corinthians 9:5

[JE 151]

### **...And sisters:**

he had more than one sister (Mathew 13:55; Mark 6:3)

### **Further Proof:**

Eusebius of Caesaria (d. AD c.340) speaks of grandchildren of another brother of Jesus, Jude (Judas) who were living in Galilee during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian (AD 81-96).

The Talmud also speaks of Jesus (Jeshu).

Paul and the historian Josephus attest to the fact that Jesus had a brother called James who was their contemporary.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem 40-41).**

### **James (Brother of Jesus):**

(Known as the Righteous) was first head of the Jerusalem followers of Jesus and was later cast into obscurity. [JE 146]. In fact one of the most neglected of New Testament documents is a letter written by James. In AD 62 he was murdered he was subsequently succeeded by Simeon son of his uncle Cleopas. [JE 149] Like James and Simeon several other 'bishops' of the circumstances' appear to have been blood relatives of Jesus. Leadership of Jesus' church was originally dynastic. [JE150].

### **Mary:**

It is not certain that his mother's name was Mary. Mathew, Mark and Luke identify her by this name. John leaves her unnamed, but speaks of her in one instance as attending her son's crucifixion accompanied by a sister called Mary, identified as Mary the wife of Clopas.(19:25). The mother of Jesus could not have been called Mary if she really did have a sister by the same name. Faced by this contradiction the Christian tradition assumed they were half sisters by same name. Although nothing in the Gospels supports this.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem ( 39-40)**

### **Mary's Reputation:**

There is a peculiarity in the genealogy ascribed to Jesus in the Matthew gospel and is that the only four female ancestors named- Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba- each happen to have been 'fallen women'. Tamar was a temple prostitute, Rahab was the madam of a brothel, Ruth the most moral indulged in shameless sexual exploitation and Bethsheba committed adultery with King David. Was the author of the Matthew genealogy implying something about the only other woman mentioned Mary herself?. [JE 64]

### **Character of Jesus:**

**Nudity:**

As revealed in the Gospel of Thomas and the 'secret' gospel of Mark, Jesus had a strikingly modern attitude to nudity. It says that Jesus after raised a man from the dead, the man liked him and wanted to stay with him. After six days the youth comes to Jesus wearing a linen cloth over his naked body and remained with him that night. This explains the gasp in verse 46 of the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of canonical Mark: "they reached Jericho, and as he left Jericho .." For centuries scholars puzzled over what might have happened in Jericho. According to the Clement letter (attributed to father Clement of Alexandria, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and addressed to a certain Theodore) the secret Gospel originally read: "And the sister of the young youth whom \Jesus loved and his mother and Salome were there, and Jesus did not receive them". Clement told Theodore that the 'secret' gospel of Mark is based on the canonical one but had additional material for special followers of Jesus.

There is another baffling episode in the canonical Mark, the fact that at the time of Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane: A young man who followed him had nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him but he left the cloth in their hands and ran away naked. (Mark 14:51-52) [JE 26-27]

#### **Sins:**

The baptism of Jesus implies that he must have had sins that needed washing Away. [JE 86]

#### **Association With Undesirables:**

The gospels frequently remark that Jesus associated with undesirables, enjoyed meals with them, spoke of himself as 'a glutton and a drunkard'(Luke 7:34), even declining to join fasts observed by John the Baptists' followers. The gospels speak that he received particularly intimate favors from 'a woman who had a bad name in the town' (Luke 7: 36-50).

Also entering in deep conversation with women. [John 4:27]. In Luke 10:38-40, he is involved in such a lengthy discourse with Mary sister of Martha of Bethany, that even the practical Martha thinks he has gone too far. [JE 96].

The authors of The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail, suggested that Jesus may secretly have married Mary Magdalane. More fuel has been added by the discovery among the Nag Hammadi hoard of a 'gospel of Philip' which relates that ...the companion of the savior is Mary Magdalene and that Jesus loved her more than all the disciples and asked to kiss her often on her mouth, and that the rest of the disciples were offended. [JE 96].

#### **Homosexuality**

Inspired by certain mysterious passages as 'the disciple Jesus loved...' 'leaning back on Jesus' breast' (John 13:23-25), Anglican Bishop Hugh Montefiore suggested that Jesus may have been a homosexual. [JE 96]

#### **Jesus' Social Status:**

It is a myth that the family was necessarily very poor. A carpenter is like the term builder today. [JE 71].

#### **Influence of John the Baptist**

The gospels even suggest that a bit of rivalry existed between the disciples of Jesus and the disciples of John.

The influence of John on Jesus has probably been played down in the synoptic authors (the first three, from the Greek for 'seen together.'. The fourth is known as the Fourth Gospel.) [JE 85]

#### **Influence of The Essenes:**

Christian gospels fail to refer to them, and likewise Dead Sea Scrolls written by the Essenes contain no recognizable mention of Jesus. The intriguing thing is that the gospel of John uses the same language used by the Essenes, such as 'light', 'darkness'. [JE 41]

#### **Miracles:**

German theologians dismiss the miracle of changing water into wine as complete fabrication. Others think Jesus was a first century hypnotist. [JE 112].

Feeding the 5000 ,(Mark( 6:44) draws on two earlier accounts one referring to 5000 and in the other to 4000. And according to Luke John the Baptist taught that if anybody had two tunics he must share with the one who has not. Scholars think that the miracle in fact is persuading the 4 or 5 thousand to share. [JE 88].

Prof. Gershom Scholem reported that during Middle Ages some Jews developed a technique of self hypnosis in which they ascended into heaven and even sitting into the throne of God. [JE 112]. What the gospels wrote about Jesus' transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36), might be derived from similar experience. [JE 112].

More. For Dr Morton Smith the 'trip' of Lazarus (his 4 days in the tomb) were not real death but in death like trance, all too easy to induce in hypnosis. [JE 113].

The same applies to his sweating in the garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:44). [JE120].

In respect of the nature of the miracles there was scant originality, for they imitated either the prophets or the pagan gods: Jesus turned water into wine, as did Dionysus on January sixth of every year; and multiplied loaves of bread, as did Elisha. He walked on water like Orion, Poseidon's son. He raised men from the dead, as did Elijah and Elishah this feat had once been so common that Aristophanes in The Frogs (405 BC) made Dionysus say of Hermes and of Hermes's father, that performing resurrections was a family profession. He gave sight to the blind by application of his spittle, the remedy which Thoth had used to restore the eyes of Horus, and one which was used all around the Mediterranean by medicine men... He healed the leper, the lunatic, the deaf and dumb as did Asklepios. The Pauline Epistles make no mention of Jesus's miraculous power, and had these miracles been known to Paul it is inconceivable that all mention of them would have been omitted. The miraculous element was interpolated partly to convince the pagans, partly to convince the jews that Jesus was the true Messiah, and partly by the sheer credulity of the Christian mind. (HS 202)

#### **Early Career of Jesus:**

The earliest known writings speaking of the earthly carrier of Jesus were not those of the original apostles of Jerusalem, but Paul's epistles- his letters written in cosmopolitan Greek to associates and emerging Christian communities. The search for the historical Jesus has so far been dependent almost entirely on the canonical Gospels –non of which is an eye-witness account- and on the occasional references made by Paul.

The chief witness to the fact that Jesus existed was Paul. Though

Paul made little allusion to the career of Jesus as a man. In the surviving epistles no reference is made to Jesus' father and in the one instance where his mother was mentioned (Galatians 4:4) she is left unnamed.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (11)**

#### **Preaching area:**

Started in Galilee then decided to abandon that territory and move to Judea perhaps in search for Roman protection.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem 44**

#### **Preaching Time-Span:**

By one estimate his preaching career, as depicted in the Gospels, can be compressed into three weeks, beyond which hardly anything about him is adequately explained. Most of the places mentioned in the New Testament in connection with his career cannot be clearly identified by name in any of these areas.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (21)**

[The Dead Sea Scrolls were finally published in full. In the 37 volume collection there was no mention to Jesus though they were written in AD 30]

**BBC News, morning of 16/11/2001 (in an interview with one of the scholars involved)**

#### **The Sermon on the Mount:**

The accepted repository of Christian teaching and piety, was a compilation from [biblical] and other sources. That it was compiled late is indicated by references to persecutions and false prophets, and by the

mention of gentiles as opposed to Christians, usages which would have been meaningless in Jesus's time when no organized Christian bodies as yet existed. (HS 186)

#### **Non -Canonical Gospel of Thomas:**

Fragmentary sayings of Jesus found at Oxyrhynchus ( El Bahnasa today), in 1897 remained unidentified until the discovery of a Gnostic library at nag Hammadi in 1945. This proved to include a hitherto lost Gospel of Thomas. [IFC]. They date to c.200 AD now known to derive from an early Greek version of a 'Gospel of Thomas'. The fragments represent earliest known documentary evidence for Jesus' existence and most important is that they include hitherto unknown sayings. The Gospel of Thomas is written in Greek characters in Coptic and belonged to a Gnostic group who professed some secret knowledge of Jesus. [JE 23]

#### **Why Was He Killed?:**

Jesus' alleged pacifism was invented by the gospel writers in order to make him more acceptable to the Gentiles. In fact he was an ardent Jewish nationalist in the mould of fellow Galilean Judas Galileus who staged the uprising among the Romans in 6 AD. His talk about the Kingdom of God was an appeal for nothing less than the overthrow of the Romans and the establishment of a new independent Jewish state. By capturing the Jerusalem Temple he nearly succeeded. The gospel mentions the fall of the Tower of Siloam (Luke 13:4). The fact that the disciple Simon is described as a zealot (Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13 Mark 3:19). Even Luke reports that Jesus recommended his disciples arm themselves just before his arrest in Gethsemane (Luke 22:36-38).

Why he then rode a donkey and not a horse in entering Jerusalem. A horse would have been ostentatious. Also 500 years earlier nabi Zachariah had seen the coming of the messiah in precisely this manner (Zachariah 9:9-10). His entering may have not been aimed at the Romans but at the Sadducean aristocrats.

Luke tells us that Jesus' group had two swords with them (Luke 22:38). [JE 114-120].

Barabas was in fact another rebellion leader. There is a cryptic reference to this in Mark 15:7 [JE 124].

#### **His Death:**

Acts Chapter 10 Paul says they killed him by hanging him on a tree. [JE 137].

The story of the empty tomb has many inconsistencies. John says Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb also (John 20:2). Matthew relates that Mary was accompanied by 'Mary the mother of James and Joseph'. Mark adds a further companion a woman called Salome, referred to in the Thomas gospel. Luke who knows nothing of any Salome, speaks only of one 'Joanna' together with other women. (Mark 16:8) [JE 138].

Similar discrepancies in reports of what they have seen. John's Mary Magdalene saw first two angels sitting in the tomb and then Jesus. Matthew's two Mary's saw one seated angel and then Jesus. Mark's three women saw a young man in a white robe and Mary Magdalene alone saw Jesus. Luke's group of women saw two women in brilliant cloths who suddenly appeared at their side but not Jesus himself who was seen only by two disciples on the road to Emmaus. All four gospels describe Jesus subsequently appearing to the full group of disciples, but while Matthew and Mark set these appearances in Galilee, the Luke and John suggest Jerusalem. Luke says Jesus appeared first to Simon Peter and then to the disciples. The other gospels mention nothing of the sort. Paul confirms that he appeared to him. [JE 138].

It is possible that Jesus by hypnosis prepared his disciples to the idea of his 'resurrection'. [JE 141].

Paul's writings omit any mention of the empty tomb which raises the possibility that the body was still inside. The idea of the tomb being empty might have been written into the gospel stories after the sack of Jerusalem in AD 70, at which time such worship would have been interrupted and the tomb perhaps actually emptied. [JE 142].

#### **Joseph of Arimathea:**

The final act of the crucifixion saga was the arrival on the scene, after Jesus' death, of a mysterious secret disciple, a 'rich man' called Joseph of Arimathea, who took charge of Jesus' body. Why not a disciple showed up and took care?. It is suggested that this detail was pre-arranged by Jesus. [JE 130]

### **Inscriptions on the Cross:**

Another puzzle the inscription on the cross. The sentence 'Jesus the Nazarine, King of the Jews' was written in Aramaic, Greek & Latin ( John 19:19) . But this is unconvincing since the Greek and Latin have been written from right to left in a manner normal for Aramaic. Most probably this a fourth century forgery as are the pieces of the cross. [JE 136]

### **The Historical Tomb:**

Sadly enough Helena's son Constantine so altered the tomb's original appearance by grandiose building projects. Today almost every vestige of the original has been lost. [JE 136].

## **III**

### **Historical Jesus vs. Christ:**

In the writings of Paul the historical Jesus emerges as a shadowy figure reduced to relative unimportance by Paul's own vision of Jesus as the living Christ.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (13)**

According to John (7:41-2) many people in Jerusalem did not accept Jesus as the Messiah because he came from Galilee, whereas the messiah was supposed to be born in Bethlehem. So, according to one tradition, Jesus was not born in Bethlehem.

The whole story of the passion and death of Jesus as told in the Gospels is replete with direct or cryptic references to Old Testament prophecies.

The Available records, do not indicate that King Herod the Great of Judea, ever ordered a massacre of all the male infants of the Bethlehem district.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (35, 36, 38)**

Issa had no human father but simply the 'Son of Mary'. The Gospel of John leaves the mother of Jesus (here Jeshu, not Issa) intentionally unnamed, and while the other three Gospels do call her Mary, they say little more about her than John does.

Jesus began to attract attention when he was 30 years old. This seems to plead with two Old testament parallels. First the reported age of Joseph when he entered the service of Pharaoh. Second the age of David when he began to reign as king.

Jesus was put to death one or two days before the Jewish Passover because this can imply an esoteric comparison between his execution and the killing of the Jewish Pascal lamb.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem ( 40)**

### **Jesus: Invention of Paul?**

Paul never knew the human Jesus and based his whole faith on a vision he claimed to have received of the resurrected Jesus, a fact that was to have profound consequences for the whole character of later Christianity.

To G A Wells (Birbeck College London) Jesus is nothing but a figment of Paul's imagination. When people began to believe in this imaginary figure he had to be given a historical setting in a specific place and time. Constructing the background became the work of the gospel writers to provide details by drawing on all sorts of details from the old testament. [JE 51-54].

There is evidence of another kind in the works of the Jewish historian Josephus. His two works (*The Jewish War* and *The Antiquities of the Jews*) represent our prime surviving sources of information on the history of the Jewish people during the first century of the Christian era. In the *Antiquities* he mentioned Jesus and that he was a Messiah and that he was crucified. However Wells thinks that this passage on Jesus was the interpolation of a later Christian copyist. [JE 51-61]

It is worth to note that Josephus makes no mention of Nazareth. The earliest the name appears in Jewish literature is in a poem of about the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. [JE 67]. Nazareth may not have existed in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.[JE 67].

From Josephus we learn that the young woman responsible for John the Baptist's execution was named Salome. [JE 84].

Paul apparently never met the historical Jesus but had a direct acquaintance with his brother James whom he met twice in Jerusalem. This means that Paul was personally convinced of the historicity of Jesus who was his contemporary.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (10-14)**

#### IV

##### **Christ: an Amalgamation:**

According to Kamal Salibi Jesus Christ is an amalgamation of three characters forged together by St.Paul:

1-**The Arabian prophet Issa** (descendant of Aaron)of the Nazarene gospel and the Koran.

2-**TheHistorical Jeshu Bar Nagara** (the carpenter, descendant of David) who appeared about four centuries later in Arabia then moved to Palestine where he died on the cross.

3-**The mythological Al Issa**, the ancient Arab god of the miraculous semen or 'ays'.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (p 58, 63, 64, 166,188)**

The people of Israel were organized into a religious community by Moses who gave them the Torah. Later two other apostles were sent to them, first Ezra, then Issa. The followers of the first became the Jews the followers of the second became the Nazarene Christians, and each of these two communities came to reserve its special apostle as a son of God. Among some 'Nazarenes' (here Christians in general) Jesus even came to be worshipped as God himself.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (52)**

##### **1- Jesus of the Koran (Issa)**

Post exilic Arabian Israelite of the law of Moses, within the context of strict Israelite monotheism. He was born of a virgin and performed miracles and was able to raise the dead back to life. His teachings were in conflict with those of Ezra the founder of post exilic Judaism.

The person who was crucified was not Issa but someone else with whom he was confused. The real Issa was assumed to heaven regardless of whether or not he died a natural human death. Before leaving the earth he prophesized the coming of another apostle called Ahmad. Ultimately Issa was to return to life to pass the final judgment on mankind on the day of Resurrection.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (52, 75,100)**

The history of Judaism during the three centuries following the career of Ezra remains virtually unknown. The career of Koranic Issa belongs to this same period of Israelite and Jewish history.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (58)**

The Koranic story is remarkable in making two distinctions. First it makes the correct distinction between the Mosaic monotheism of the early Israelites and the Jewish faith which began to evolve from it in post exilic times – with the career of Ezra by general reckoning. Second the story clearly depicts Judaism and the original Christianity of the Nazarenes as different departures from the original religion of Israel, and thus suggests a new vision of the origins of Christianity as a sister religion to Judaism, rather than a runaway Jewish sect, as has long been the common view. Issa was active in the same environment where Islam was born (Western Arabia). Also the Nazarenes Christianity emerged at a time when the Israelites, as a people, as distinct from the Jews as a later-day- religious community still existed –which implies a date for the mission of the Koranic “Jesus” which is perhaps closer to the fifth century BC than to the first century BC. There is at least one indication in the Islamic literature to endorse the idea that Christianity (the religion of the Nasara) originated in Arabia rather than Palestine. In the geographical dictionary of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyari, (a north African Arab originally from the Yemen) *Al-Rawd al Mi'tar fi khabar al-aqtar*, remarked unequivocally that “ther origin of this religion (pre-Islamic Christianity) was in Najran” (*wa-kan asl dhalik al-din bi-Najran*).

The history of the Biblical Israelites ran its full course in eastern Arabia, and that the original monotheism of Moses as well as the Judaism that evolved from it have their roots there, and not in Palestine. In terms of geography Palestine can be viewed as a northward extension of Western Arabia, and some Arabian Israelites did arrive to settle in that country in Biblical times. Later, during the Hellenistic period Judaism under the Hasmonean dynasty came to have one of its main political centers in Palestine, where the principal Jewish city was called Jerusalem after the older, Israelite (and hence Biblical) Jerusalem of Arabia—probably the present village of Al Sharim in the Asir highlands, once referred to in ancient Arabic literature as *Uri Shalim*. The Wailing Wall in Jerusalem is nothing more than the remnant of the great temple that Herod the Great erected in Palestinian Jerusalem and was destroyed when the city was sacked by the Romans in AD 70. Despite continuous archaeological efforts not the least shred of evidence has been discovered to indicate that the Biblical temple of King Solomon had earlier stood on the same site.

In Western Arabia the political history of the Israelites came to an end with the destruction of the kingdom of Judah and the captivity of its people by the Babylonians in 586 BC. After conquering Babylon in 539 BC, the Persians arranged for large numbers of the Israelite exiles to return to their Arabian homelands and attempt reconstruction of their society on its original territory. The career of Ezra belongs to this period.

Out of the original Israelite monotheism of the Hebrew patriarchs and of Moses Judaism and the original Christianity developed as two different sects.

The Koran suggests that Issa was a Sadducee and therefore a strict follower of the original Israelite monotheism. Apparently there was a Christianity in Arabia, that of the *Nasara* or *Nazarenes* which was several centuries older than the one which relates to the historical Jesus of the Gospels. It was a primordial Christianity which survived on its original home ground until the coming of Islam.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (52-58)**

## **2- Jeshu Bar Nagara (The Israelite prophet of the Greek Gospels)**

The Jeshu who left Arabia was called Jeshu Nagara or Bar Nagara (meaning carpenter). [NB. Bar Nagara need not have referred to an ancestral occupation, but also to a location, a place of origin: there are at least 5 places in the Hijaz whose name is *ngr*. (Conspiracy 90)].

He was an Israelite of the tribe of Judah. In Palestine he came to be known as Jeshu of Nazareth (after the Arabian tribal territory of the Nasirah around Wadi Jalil in the Taif region of the Hijaz).

He appeared four centuries after Issa. He was a religious rather than a political figure could well have been the leader of a Nazarene religious revival.

(By the time Luke was set out to write his Gospel, the name of his Jeshu had already passed into Greek as *Iesous*. The Issa of the Nazarene Gospel could also be spoken of in Greek as *Iesous*. Luke was apparently convinced that the two men were the same person about whom different sources and traditions told different stories so he made a free selection of these stories and proceeded to fuse them into one account.

Luke was uncritical in his handling his sources frequently copying them word by word. For example in the book of Acts which he wrote as a sequel to his Gospel, he reproduced the story of Paul from various traditions and texts. But while he related most of his account in the third person he kept the 'we-sections' in the first person plural, exactly as he discovered them in the diary of one of Paul's traveling companions.

John knew that Mary was the mother of Issa and that the mother of Jeshu was not called Mary (*Maryam*) which was the name of her sister. Therefore as he spoke about the two persons as one he never mentioned the name of the mother although he made no less than four references to her in his Gospel.

On the other hand John no less than Paul was determined to present his Jeshu as a historical figure who was more than an ordinary human being. Paul had depicted him as the eternal Christ of all time, and John for his part took the notion of the *kalimah* from the Nazarene Gospel of Issa, rendered the term in Greek as *logos* or 'word' and elaborated the idea. In the original Nazarene Gospel, a term spelt *klmh* was apparently used in connection with Issa to underline his status as a true prophet entrusted with the word of God. (In the Koran Issa was the *kalimah* of God).

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (75-77, 81,90,100)**

### **Christianity in Arabia**

There was a Christianity in Arabia –that of the *Nasara*- which was several centuries older than the one which relates to the historical Jesus of the Gospels: a primordial Christianity which survived on its original home ground certainly until the coming of Islam

(Conspiracy in Jerusalem 58)

### **Christians vs. Nazarenes:**

Apparently there was a Christianity in Arabia-that of the *Nasara*, or Nazarenes- which was several centuries older than the one which relates to the historical Jesus of the Gospels: a primordial Christianity which survived on its original home ground certainly until the coming of Islam.

Followers of Paul first called themselves Christians reportedly in Antioch. But the original followers of Jesus in Jerusalem used to call themselves Nazarenes referring to their faith as a cult or “the Way”.

There were clashes between the two and religious issues remained unsettled.

In AD 62 James, Jesus’ brother was put to death by order of Jewish high priest by stoning. Paul died shortly after. In AD 70 Jerusalem was sacked by Romans, in 135, the Jewish community there, along with Israelite and Gentile followers of the Nazarene Way, were forcibly dispersed, Christianity as preached by Paul and his party survived.

Conspiracy in Jerusalem (58, 8-9)

### **Waraqah Ibn Nawfal:**

Was a Christian in pre-Islamic Arabia and an ordained priest closely related to Muhammad’s wife Khadijah. One well known Islamic reference to Waraqah is by al-Bukhari – an Islamic scholar of the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD who collected oral and written traditions concerning the life and sayings of Muhammad. Al-Bukhari noted that Warqah used to ‘write Hebrew’ and used to make copies of the Gospel (‘al-Injil’ in the singular) ‘in Hebrew’. (This could mean Hebrew or Aramiac, for the term, according to the Arab usage of the term ‘Hebrew’ indicated the common script in which the two related languages could be written rather than the language itself.

### **The Nazarene Gospel:**

The Gospel which still existed in Arabia in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD – the one used by Waraqah- was most probably written in Aramaic. Of this lost Aramaic Gospel one might safely assume that the story it related about Jesus was not much different from the one text of the Koran. It must have been the Gospel of the Nazarenes whose Jesus was the Koranic Issa, not the Jeshu of Paul and the Greek Gospels. Islamic traditions recorded as early as the eighth century AD indicate that the same Gospel still existed in Muhammad’s time in Ethiopia. According to Ibn Ishaq who wrote the earliest known biography of Muhammad, the Negus summoned the fugitives (followers of the Prophet who were at a time persecuted in Mecca and fled across the Red Sea to *al-Habashah*) and questioned them on the matter while his leading bishops stood in attendance armed with their scriptures. In response the spokesman of the Muslim group recited chapters of the Koran. “*The Negus wept until his beard became wet. The bishops also wept until their scriptures became soaked. The Negus then said: there is no more to Jesus in addition to what you have said*”.

By the time of Muhammad, apostolic Christianity i.e. Christianity of St. Paul, was already firmly established in the Roman or Byzantine world and its immediate peripheries. In Arabia and Ethiopia Christianity was already known in its older Nazarene form before the arrival of the apostolic missionaries. The triumph of apostolic Christianity over the older Nazarene faith must have begun in the 4<sup>th</sup> century in the wake of the conversion of the Roman empire. Islam emerged on the scene to reaffirm the veracity of their original Gospel recognizing their Issa as the one and only true Jesus.

The Gospel of the Arabian and Ethiopian Nazarenes was perhaps dated as far as the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century- the period of the Koranic Issa of whose life it provided the principal record.

Most probably what prompted Paul to visit Arabia so urgently was his knowledge – or at least suspicion- that the Jesus who died on the cross in Jerusalem originally came from Arabia – perhaps the Hijaz. He would have been curious to discover something concerning the Arabian background of Jesus. Having learnt in Arabia about the Issa of the Nazarene Gospel Paul could not have failed to notice that the apostles preaching the Nazarene way in Jerusalem in his time were determined to identify their Jeshu with this Issa:

the son of Joseph the carpenter, who had surviving brothers and sisters, with the only son of the Virgin Mary; the 'Jesus' descended from David with the 'Jesus' who was not; the one who was crucified in Jerusalem with the one who died a natural death in Arabia and was believed to have been assumed to heaven. Paul did not publicize what he came to know for fear that it would endanger the survival of the new faith also because he wanted to elaborate a theory of Jesus as the transcendental and eternal Christ by giving Jeshu -as a historical figure of his own age- the esoteric rather than the historical figure of Issa- a figure of a much earlier period.

The three Gospels ( known as the 'Synoptic' : Mathew, mark & Luke ) are basically composed of parallel accounts of the career of Jesus. Gospel of John however stands alone in many ways. At one time it was considered historically the least authoritative bearing the strong marks of Hellenistic Gnosticism. More recently it is viewed as the most 'Aramaic' preserving the oldest tradition. In this case it may be possible it was derived from the Aramaic Gospel of Issa which still existed in the Hijaz in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Stories about Jesus reflected in the Koran are found in Matthew, Luke and John but not Mark. ( not every thing is identical. For example the stories about Jesus' infancy in Matthews is completely unlike the Koran which means the origins of these stories in Matthew are not of Nazarene origin-the Nazarene gospel spoke of Issa not of Jeshu).

Luke's story concerning the virgin pregnancy of Mary and the birth of Jeshu.

Surely the 'Jesus' of the canonical Gospels – certainly in Luke and John- is not one person but a fusion of two historical figures: one of them the Jeshu claiming descent from David who was crucified in Jerusalem, the other Issa as Israelite religious figure who was probably active in Arabia not long after the time of Ezra (late 5<sup>th</sup> or early 4<sup>th</sup> century BC). The clue to this comes from the Koran which represents the story of Issa as the true 'Jesus' as the one and only one *Injil*, insisting that the 'Jesus' who died on the cross was someone else.

In short John knew the Aramaic Gospel which spoke about Issa and made use of it in constructing his own Gospel about Jeshu. The same was the case with Luke. Paul on the other hand made no use of it in constructing the image of Jeshu as the eternal Jesus Christ the only Son of God. Instead he used traditions deriving from some Arabian source other than the Nazarene Gospel. Issa of this Gospel was a strict Israelite monotheist in the tradition of Moses and Aaron and hardly a Christian figure.

Paul surely brought back from Arabia the Aramaic Gospel. For in his last years as he languished in the prison expecting execution anxiously asked for these books of 'parchment' to be sent to him- perhaps to destroy them- least anyone should discover them after his death.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (60-73)**

### **Jeshu Moves From Arabia to Palestine**

In 24 BC two or three decades before Jeshu Bar Nagara was born the Roman legions of Aelius Gallus had invaded Arabia as far south as the Yemen passing through Hijaz . This triggered a fresh wave of migration from western Arabia in the direction of Palestine as normally happened in such situations. On an earlier occasion Arabia immigrants from Wadi Jalil had settled in northern Palestine giving the name of their original homeland to anew Galilee in that locality. After the Roman invasion of Arabia more immigrants from the same Wadi Jalil – Among them members of the local themselves Nasirah must have arrived to establish themselves giving their name Nazareth where they settled.

*[It is worth noting that the existence of Nazareth as a town in the Palestinian Galilee is very poorly attested for the period of Jeshu]. (Conspiracy in Jerusalem 83)*

### **Arabia:**

During the time of Paul, Arabia as a geographical term had two different connotations. Roman Arabia started in Damascus which was governed by the agent of a King Aretas (Arabic *al-Harith*) the Nabatean Arab King of Petra whom the Romans recognized as a client. Beyond the Nabatean kingdom the vast peninsula of Arabia stretched all the way south to the Indian Ocean. The Greek geographer Strabo, tells us that the western parts of this peninsula, called today the Hijaz, formed an Arabian Kingdom or principality which was tributary to Petra. Further south lay the Yemen ruled since 115 BC by the dynasty of Himyar

which was to last until the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Scholars assumed that the Arabia Paul visited was Roman Arabia – the territory south of Damascus, including modern Jordan. [But Salibi is not convinced]. Being in Damascus Paul did not have to “go” (he was there). Clearly where he went lies beyond Roman Arabia, probably the Hijaz or the Yemen. The Arabian Jews probably knew something extremely important about Jesus himself and his mission which Paul wanted to learn from them first hand before embarking on his own apostolic work. Paul must have had suspicion that James, Peter, and John and their party were covering up some secret. What is this secret that lies in Arabia which could only be learnt from Arabia?. Could it be that the Jerusalem apostles and also Jesus himself must have been in Arabia at some point?. Perhaps they were Arabian Israelites who came from there. And if Paul wanted to learn something about Jesus in Arabia, it was something that he preferred to remain silent about for he said nothing special about the subject in his epistles.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (27-30)**

Jeshu and his disciples originally came to Palestine from Arabia.

This means that Jeshu of the New Testament was possibly no less Arabian by origin than the Issa of the Nazarene. In this case his native Galilee would not have been the Galilee of Palestine but another Galilee in Arabia: the valley called today Wadi Jalil in the Taif region of the Hijaz. The tribe inhabiting this valley are called to this day the Nasirah (spelt nsrt), which is exactly the name of the town of Nazareth (Arabic *Nasirah* also *nsrt*).

New Testament scholars often noted that the historical existence of Nazareth as a town in the Palestinian Galilee is poorly attested for the period of Jeshu. The earliest possible mention of its name in a known archaeological record actually dates from no earlier than the third century AD.

*It should be noted that 2 centuries before this Jeshu left Arabia a Jewish Kingdom had been established in Central Palestine under the local priestly house of the Hasmoneans then expended by conquest to include Galilee in the north and Idumea in the south. Judaism was forcibly imposed on the local Arameo-Arab inhabitants. After the coming of the Romans the Palestinian Jewish kingdom founded by the Hasmoneans passed under the rule of a Jew of Idumean origin called Herod the Great who was recognized by the Romans as a client king. [don't mix with Herod Antipas who was governor of Galilee who decapitated John the Baptist, nor with Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great who was appointed by the Romans when they restored for a short time the kingdom of Judea in Palestine around 41AD].*

The geographical indications that Jeshu originally came from Arabia, taken alone, are considerably stronger than the ones that would make him a native of Palestine.

Ex: Galilee=Jalil, Nazareth=Nasirah, Bethsaida=Sayadah, Chorazin= Qurazimah, Zebedee=Zubaydah.

Five original disciples accompanied Jeshu when he left his native Hijaz to go to Palestine: Simon and Phillip of Sayadah, the brothers John and James of Zubaydah, and Levi of 'Allaf (Alphaeus). Later he was followed to Palestine by Andrew of Sayadah (brother of Simon) and James of 'Allah.

Judging from their surnames Simon Zelotes (from Zu'lah) and Judas Iscariot must have been of Arabic origin. Simon is also known as Simon the Kannanite= village of Qinan.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (82-83,87-99,105,106)**

### **The Mission of Bar Nagara**

#### **The Messiah:**

Judging by the Koran, Issa was regarded as an Israelite Messiah, or Christ, although he was descended – certainly through his mother – from the priestly house of Aaron, and not from the royal house of David. So we have a priestly Messiah of the house of Aaron, and a royal Messiah from the house of David.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem, 63-4)**

In his time Bar Nagara was recognized as a descendant of David, with a rightful claim to the historical Israelite throne. (*Luke says he was thirty years when he started his preaching (3:23) Therefore he must have left before the age of thirty because their society preferred marriage and frowned on willful male celibacy.* (**Conspiracy in Jerusalem 104, 109**))

Why did he leave his native Arabian Galilee

to undertake the disastrous venture in Palestine which ended with his execution?

Perhaps he must have thought that his chances of succeeding in his political fortunes in Palestine were better there than at home. He was convinced of the rightness of his cause. When Jeshu Bar Nagara was born the movement of population between Arabia and northern Palestine was going on back and forth. At that time there was a rift among the Israelite and non Israelite Jews of Palestine.

The Romans had established direct rules on Judea, while different members of the house of Herod governed other parts. Since the death of King Herod the Great in 4 BC The Romans denied these princelings the royal title. In Galilee the local ruling tetrarch (governors of fourth parts) was Herod Antipas who was generally unpopular with the Israelites by origin or who were not very much concerned about the question of Israelite dynastic legitimacy. Whatever support he had came from local Jews. The Israelite and non-Israelite Jews of Palestine were not of one heart and mind. Herodians accommodated themselves with Greek culture. Zealots rejected the invading culture by religious principles. The priestly class of the Sadducees (who upheld the original Israelite monotheism of Moses) quarreled endlessly with the rabbis of the Pharisees (under the influence of Ezra gave monotheism a broader interpretation which took into account the scriptural contributions of all the Biblical prophets as well as the 'Oral Torah' which provided the basis for the Talmud).

The Israelites of different sects were unhappy with the plight of their race and yearned for the promised Messiah, the Son of David.

Jeshu Bar Nagara, who pondered in the Hijaz this information as he received it from travelers, saw his opportunity to act. After all he was Israelite prince of the royal line. Perhaps his family encouraged him. This may explain the only passage in the Gospels where the brothers of Jeshu are actually made to speak: *'Leave here and go to Judea...no man works in secret if he seeks to be known openly ...show yourself to the world'*. John 7:3-4).

Leaving the Hijaz Bar Nagara had to cross the Jordan valley to reach Galilee. The first contact he made there was with John the Baptist a local Israelite religious figure with many followers whose goodwill Ben Nagara was determined to secure as a political asset. John knew the special identity of Ben Nagara and most probably knew about his mission and for that was reluctant to baptize him, telling him: *'I ought to be baptized by you'*. But Bar Nagara insisted.

That there were people in Palestine who recognized Jeshu as an Israelite prince of the royal line upon his arrival is demonstrated by the story of his meeting with the disciple Nathanael (**John1: 45-49**): *'We have found the one whom Moses wrote about...he is Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth'*

According to Paul the 'human' Jesus was not only a descendent of David but also a rich man who made himself poor by his own free will (**2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:5**).

Certainly the mission of Bar Nagara in Palestine was more political than religious and the pursuit of politics is more expensive. Judging by the Gospels these funds were available and managed by Judas Iscariot who carried the 'bag'. Where did these funds come from?

The family of Bar nagara was unhappy with his decision to go to Palestine alone leaving them virtually destitute in the Hijaz and they soon followed him. Evidently this was not what he wanted and the first time the Gospels mention a meeting between them and Jeshu it is to record the chilly reception he gave them. They were left standing outside waiting for him to finish a public address. When someone interrupted his address to inform him of their presence Jeshu replied with the comment that his real 'mother' and 'brothers' and 'sisters' were not those of the blood who were waiting for him but his true followers.

Wherever he went in Palestine Jeshu made great issue of being the promised Messiah descendant from David. Perhaps he preached nothing else. Were the beautiful teachings which the Gospels attribute to him his own?. Or were they of a less political Jesus: perhaps the Issa of the Nazarenes Gospel?.

Of Jeshu's own political preaching the following is a good example:

*On the Sabbath ..he stood up to read the Scriptures. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor...to proclaim liberty to the captives...to set free the oppressed ...'( Luke4:16-22).*

The concept he had of himself as the Israelite Messiah became more and more militant –in fact openly revolutionary:

*Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the world. No. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. I came to set sons against their fathers, daughters against their mothers ...a man's worst enemies will be the members of his own family. (Mathew 10:34-6; also in Luke).*

When Herod Antipas executed John the Baptist Ben Nagara immediately went into hiding (Matthew 14:13).

Increasingly opposed by powerful Jewish enemies he was still determined to pursue his mission as a Son of David. But became convinced that he had either to forfeit his credibility by fleeing for personal safety or else he had to die. But his whole concept of the rightful Messiah changed: *'My Kingdom does not belong to this world'* (John 18:36).

According to the old testament prophet Zachariah, the promised Messiah was to enter Jerusalem in his time riding on an ass. This is what Bar Nagara decided to do. Upon entering he led his party to the Temple speaking of it as 'my fathers house' and accused the authorities in charge of having turned it into a 'hideout for thieves'.

After the Jews sentenced him to death he was sent to Pontius Pilate (Governor of Judea) and the rest of the story is known. **Conspiracy in Jerusalem ( 100,101,104, 106,109-113,115-117)**

### **3-The Mythological Al Issa of Arabia**

Let us Consider the following statements:

*I am the bread of life.*

*I am the light of the world*

*My father and I are one*

*I have come in order that you might have life..life in all its fullness*

*I am the vine, and you are the branches. For you can do nothing without me.*

*John (4:32;6:35;7:37;8:12;10:10;11, 30; 11:25-6;15:1-3, 5)*

The particular Jesus to whom that these statements were ascribed need not have been human. Certainly he could not have been the man who preached the virtues of selflessness and humility in the Sermon of the Mount. Nor he could been Issa the prophet of the Nazarene Gospel, who was apparently a strict monotheist in the tradition of Moses, except that he taught a more liberal interpretation of the law.

Jeshu Basr Nagara as a claimant of David's throne would never have spoken himself of such terms which far exceed the Old Testament concept of the Messiah.

The person of the 'I am' statements of the Fourth Gospel was definitely not a human being. He was a god. More than that he was a god of fertility. *'I have come in order that you might have life.'*

In the lore of the ancient Near East, the fertility gods are beyond count. Is it possible that there was a 'Jesus' among them?.

According to the Koran some of the followers of Issa, the Jesus of the Nazarene Gospel, used to worship him I error as a god. This could mean that that the identity of Issa came to be confused in some Nazarene circles with that of a deity by the same name-a confusion which was still in existence with the advent of Islam in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. It is intriguing that in the West Arabian regions of the Hijaz and Asir, no less than 7 villages are called *Al Issa* (pronounced *Il Isa*, or *El Isa*, literally the '*God Issa*'), thus immortalizing the name 'Jesus' as that of a deity. Other variants of the name such as *Al 'Ays* (the '*God of Semen*') and *Al 'Ayyash* (the '*Life-Giving God*') are also abundant.

Inscriptions in an ancient Arabian script called Thamudic, discovered in the northern Hijaz and dated between the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD make three clear references to a god whose name is spelt 's'.

Certainly an ancient God called Issa or Jesus was worshipped in Arabia at one time. But his divine person was associated with some kind of trinity: Lordship, Power, and Glory. This trinity of the Arabian God Jesus must have antedated the conventional Christian Trinity of the 'Father, 'the Son', and the 'Holy Spirit' by many centuries.

Linguistically, the name Issa (*Isa*) is the Aramaic form of the Arabic *al-'ayc*, meaning 'the water of the male', in reference to the masculine semen. Related to this term is the Arabic *'Aysh*, meaning 'life'. The Jesus of the 'I am' statements was none other than the God Jesus who was Al *'Isa* or Al *'Ays*- the ultimate source of the fertilizing 'Power' of the male.

In one passage of his Gospel, John unknowingly gives the secret away by relating the following story:

In Samaria he came to a town named Sychar. Tired out of the journey he sat down by the well. A Samaritan woman came to draw some water, and Jesus said to her 'Give me a drink of water...if you only knew who it is who is asking for a drink, you would ask him and he would give you *life-giving water*.' ...*who ever drinks the water that I will give will never be thirsty again*. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring which will provide him with the life-giving water and give him eternal life.(John 4: 5-16).

This Jesus has nothing to do with Palestine. His 'Samaria' (the Shemron of the Old Testament) is the present village and tribal territory of Shimran (the exact Bible name) in the West Arabian province of Asir. In Western Arabia a place by the identical name *Siqar* is located in the close neighborhood of the present Shimran (or 'Samaria') territory.

The Jesus of the above mentioned story was the god Al Issa. AS the ultimate masculine source of Life, Al Issa was conceived of as being his own father: 'My father and I are one'. The fertility with which he endows mankind through the male becomes a triumph of life over death, promising eternal life. *I am the resurrection and the life ..and whoever believes in me will never die*'.

The conclusion is inescapable: The composite Jesus of Paul who was betrayed and died on the cross then rose from the dead to bring salvation to the world was none other than the Arabian god Jesus. The historical Bar Nagara died on the cross in Jerusalem and that was the end of his story. It was as the god Jesus that he rose from the tomb.

Al Issa also had the power to redeem the dead. He must have been worshipped under the attested name of Dhu Khalasah (the God of Redemption). In the early 7<sup>th</sup> century, the worship of Dhu Khalasah was still popular in some Arabian regions. Its principal sanctuary was somewhere south of Mecca- the famous *al-Ka'bah al Yamaniah* rivaling that of Mecca, and located in Tubalah in inland Asir. Muhammad we are told sent a party of his followers to destroy the idol of Dhu Khalasah- a sculpture of white stone depicting a phallus topped by a crown. This cult resurrected and in 1815 the Wahhabis organized a special military campaign to suppress the remnants of pagan worship and the reconstructed idol of Dhu Khalasah in his original Kaaba was destroyed by gunfire.

Surmising the 'mysteries' (1 Corinthians 4:1) Paul immediately went to Arabia there he must have discovered among other things:

- 1- The Nazarene Gospel of prophet Issa.
- 2- The living cult of Al Issa or Dhu Khalasah and its scriptures.

He brought these back with him - one or more of the books of parchment which he kept strictly for himself while he lived.

What Paul termed as the ' great secret of our religion' found in these scriptures were embedded in his letters:

*He appeared in human form, was shown to be right by the Spirit, and was seen by angels.*

*He was preached among the nations, was believed in throughout the world, and was taken up to heaven.*

*If we have died with him , we shall also live with him.*

*If we deny him, he will also deny us.*

*If we are not faithful, he remains faithful, because he cannot be false to himself.*

( 1 Timothy 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:11-13)

How different from the primitive didactic preachings of the Nazarene apostles, now altered to accommodate Gentile converts to the new Way. A god of love who was not transcendental to humanity but one in whose divinity all mankind could fully share.

In the original Arabian cult of the god Jesus, this god was not the creator of the universe. He was only the source of life. The creator was another- older god. To the original 'Father' of the creation, the god Jesus was the 'Son'. As the cult developed the 'Father' and 'Son' came to be regarded as a single god.

After identifying the 'Son' as the contemporary Christ- Jeshu Bar Nagara,- who had died on the cross not many years before, Paul became convinced that the 'secret' must finally be revealed:

*God gave me this task ...of fully proclaiming his message, which is the secret he did through all mankind,...and the secret is that Christ is in you which means you will share in the glory of God.*

(Colossians 1:25-7)

The mystery of the Arabian god Jesus did not involve the eternal coexistence of a 'Father' and a 'Son.' Its scriptures also referred to a 'Spirit' by which the god was shown to be right when he manifested himself in human form.

It was Matthew who first spoke of the Trinity of the father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus in post-Pauline Christianity a new trinity was substituted for an older one.

In the Gospels the statements made by Jesus show him to speaking with an authority which is far more in character with than with man. 1<sup>st</sup> the 'I am speech'. 2<sup>nd</sup> the concept of the 'Father and the Son'. 3<sup>rd</sup> the divine authority with which it is communicated to the disciples who are ordinary human beings. The source of all three statements is the scriptures of the Arabian Jesus cult.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (140- 158)**

#### **Lazarus:**

It is interesting to note that the story of raising Lazarus from the dead in Bethany was not originally told about the historical Jesus (Jeshu Ben Nagara) and is as told in the Gospel of John is a mixture of two or more sets of events, part of which Jeshu Bar Nagara was part of. John fused these events in a composite account of Bar Nagara, showing that his godliness is represented in his ability to raise a man from the dead.

A historical analytical scrutiny shows that Lazarus need not have been a man. Throughout the story he remains strangely silent and inactive never really coming to life. When he is reportedly raised from death he is simply 'untied' and left to 'go'.

Could Lazarus have been an idol?.

Scholars have recognized the name Lazarus as being identical with *Eliezer* (a construct of 'l meaning 'god' and 'zr or y'zr ). The identical name is inscribed in some Arabian inscriptions discovered in Northern Hijaz as *'Adhr El* . The *Lazarus* of the New Testament , the equivalent of the *Eliezer* of the Old Testament, and also of the *'Adhr El* of the West Arabian inscriptions essentially means the 'God of Virginity'.

Consequently some ancient association existed between the cult of virginity and of Al Issa, the god of the life-giving 'ays, or 'water of the male'. Evidence is shown on the map of Western Arabia in the Bani Zayd neighborhood of the hill country of Rijal Alma', on the maritime slopes of Asir, west of the city of Abha. Here standing close to one another , are two villages which still carry distinctly the names of these two

gods. One is the 'Lazarus' village of al-'Adhra; the other is the 'Jesus' village called al-'Ays bin Hamad, its name meaning precisely 'the semen, son of the comforter'.

As for Bethany (Beth 'Anya), the place where the miracle happened, also there is geographical evidence to support its mythological background. It features on the map of West Arabia in Arabicized form as *al-'An* or *al-'Aniyah*. A number of villages carry this name in different parts of the area. (consider 'Anaya in North Lebanon).

Accordingly the Arabian 'Bethany' which is today al-'Aniyah of Rijal Alma' to have been the original geographical setting of the Lazarus story as related by John, and a myth - part of the rich Arabian lore concerning the 'Jesus' who was actually the fertility god Al Issa. (NB: *Al-'Adhr* was the god of virginity).

[In fact Salibi unveils the truth out of the twists of the Gospel and reconstructs the original myth out of the distortions in a superb way in p 170]. **Conspiracy in Jerusalem (162-170)**

## V

### **Transformation From Jewish Religion to Gentile Faith:**

In the years immediately following Jesus' crucifixion was not characterized by harmony between believers, but rather by intense rivalry between two major factions that of James and his Palestinian born Jews and that of Paul and his fellow Hellenistic Gentiles. [JE 150]. Disciples faithful to the Jewish Law were labeled 'Nazarenes' and Jewish Christians'. [JE 154].

(By the way Paul was not necessarily the universally revered figure within the earliest Church. [JE 145]). Paul saw Jesus' death on an other-worldly level, one of faith and imagination. It was a divine plan thought out 'before the aeons', whereby the 'powers that rule the world' crucified in ignorance a supernatural 'Lord of glory', (1 Corinthians 2:8). Instead of referring to Jesus as 'the Christ' which would have been the correct translation of 'Messiah' into Greek, Paul adopted the fashion (he most likely initiated it) of calling Jesus 'Christ' as if this was a proper name, ignoring its political connotations and also referred to him as *the Son of God* (Acts 9:20). And on the strength of his profound conversion experience, and being himself merely a Hellenistic Jew, he apparently decided that it should be perfectly permissible for Gentile converts to Jesus' teaching to discard traditional requirements of the Jewish Law, such as circumcision and prohibition of the eating of 'unclean' meats - requirements that during the Maccabean revolt Jews had laid down their lives to defend. [JE 144-145].

Acts makes it clear that there was a controversy over whether uncircumcised Gentiles should be baptized. [JE 148].

This also led to conflict and rivalry with Peter.

The New Testament two letters of Peter, the second speaking of 'our brother Paul... so dear to us' (2 Peter 3:15), were most likely forged in Peter's name by some pre-Pauline writer, and that letters attributed to Paul, notably the Pastorals were fabricated to create a false impression of harmony. [JE 154].

The intense rivalry was between two major factions: James and his fellow Palestinian - born Jews believing in Jesus and his teachings but upholding traditional observance such as circumcision and that of Paul his fellow Hellenists and Gentiles, likewise believing in Jesus but maintaining that faith with all its hypnotic force, overrode the old requirements of the Jewish Law. [JE 150].

Within 6 years of the death of James the Righteous (Jesus' brother who was leader of the church) in 62 AD both Peter and Paul were executed in Rome. And in 66 AD began the bloody years of Jewish revolt and the desolation of Jerusalem and the total destruction of the Temple and the suicide of the defenders of Masada in 74 AD. This eventuality, coupled with an intense wave of anti-Jewish feeling across the Empire provided the opportunity to free Jesus' teaching from the Jewish law so craved by the pro-Pauline faction. [JE 152].

### **The Israelites and the Jews:**

Ancient people whose history until the 5<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century BC is recorded in the Hebrew Bible. The Jews on the other hand are the followers of Biblical monotheism and the laws of Moses as interpreted and developed by Rabbinical tradition in post-exilic times (after the 6<sup>th</sup> century).

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (footnote 46)**

### **How Jews Came to be?..**

In the middle decades of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, an eminent Israelite scholar called Ezra of the priestly house of Aaron, gathered the sundry scriptures and traditions of his people and redacted them into a formal canon. Ezra at that time lived among the Israelite exiles in Babylon. Later when the Achaemenid rulers of Persia permitted the return of the Israelites to their native land of Judah, he led a group of them to Jerusalem Possible to Jerusalem of Arabia (Uri Shalim in the Asir highlands) and not to that of Palestine. Israelites and other followers of the monotheism of Moses who accepted the authority of Ezra – Babylon and Arabia as in Palestine and elsewhere- came to be known as the Jews.

Some decades later about 400 BC, a man called Issa began to preach a more liberal interpretation of the monotheism of Moses among the Israelites of the same Arabian Jerusalem. His mother Mary was regarded in her time as a holy woman of the temple allegedly belonged to the priestly house of Aaron. His teachings were opposed by some of the Jews but accepted in parts of Arabia- Hijaz- where the followers of Issa came to be known as the *Nasara*. This was perhaps his first success was in the tribal territory of *Nasirah*, the Arabian ‘Nazareth’. These Nazarenes had a special Gospel written in Aramaic whose existence in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD the period of the rise of Islam- is attested by authoritative Islamic traditions. This Gospel was also known in Ethiopia - in Aramaic or perhaps in translation- and was later lost and its actual text remains unknown. However what it originally said may be inferred from the Koran. More than four centuries later in about AD 30 a man called Jeshu of Nazareth son of Joseph the carpenter left the region of Wadi Jalil in the Hijaz (the Arabian Galilee) and arrived in another region by the same name in Palestine (the Palestinian Galilee). [to this day the inhabitants of his native Arabian Galilee continue to be known as the *Nasirah*. This Jeshu was recognized by his Israelite contemporaries as a descendant of David with a legitimate claim to the historical throne of the Biblical Kingdom of Judah which had ceased to exist in Arabia since the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. He was apparently a Nazarene not a Jew. His early followers were called Nazarenes. Local Jews felt threatened and demanded his execution. Consequently he was put to death on the cross after he arrived with his partisans in Jerusalem.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (87 -99)**

## **VI**

### **How He Became God?.**

#### **The Historical Background:**

In the Koran Mary and her son Isaa came to be worshipped jointly as “two Gods” subservient to the supreme God, although Issa himself had never wanted this to happen and considered it wrong. (5:116). John gives Jesus the important attributes of the Koranic Issa and so does Luke. All four Gospels called him the Son of God.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (57, 59)**

Paul had depicted Christ as the eternal Christ of all time. John no less than Paul was determined to present his Jeshu as a historical figure who was more than an ordinary human being. So John took the notion of the *kalimah* from the Nazarene Gospel of Issa, rendered the term in Greek as *logos* or “word” and elaborated the idea (John 1:1-14).

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (78-9)**

It should also be noted that John the Baptist first recognized him as the Son of the God.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (80)**

In the original Arabian cult of the god Jesus this god was not the creator of the universe. He was only the source of life. The creator was another, older god. As the cult developed within the Christianity of Paul and John the “Father” and the “Son” came to be regarded as a single god, the “father” in this god being able to communicate directly with mankind as the “Son” who dies as a man and rises from death. This was a secret which Paul was convinced later that it must be revealed not only to his people but to the whole world. (Colossians 1:25-7)

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (149-150)**

When he was baptized (privately), we are told that as he surfaced he seemed to have received a vision in the form of a dove accompanied by a heavenly voice declaring: you are my son". (Mark 1:11) But this is a Jewish tradition. In Orthodox Jewish tradition, the *hasid* Hanina ben Dosa was specifically associated with hearing a heavenly voice calling him 'my son Hanina'. In the Jewish royal tradition a perfectly human king of the Jews became a son of god at the time of his anointing as Messiah. As for the bird

reported as associated with his vision by all canonical gospels, Norton Smith says that this vision is present in all early mystery religion initiations, and that such initiations were commonly followed by a period of self enforced 'forty days in the wilderness'. [JE 87].

By 312 AD only 9 years since Diocletian began his persecution of Christians, the whole political face of the Empire had been changed. ... Constantine was planning to capture Rome, he was badly in need of something to give his cause extra purpose and justification. He had a dream in which he was shown a sign (Chi & Rho) accompanied by the words: *hoc signo victor eris*. (by this sign you shall be victor). For him it was an inspiration and by morning every morning had this symbol on his shield. [JE 157].

The events of the day at the Milvian Bridge in which Constantine won the battle, shaped the events and made Christianity the world religion we know now. Constantine was not a Christian before the battle. Six years before he had hundreds of Frankish prisoners torn to pieces in an arena. After his victory the triumphal arch erected in his honor was adorned with pagan symbols. A commemorative medal pictured him alongside Sol Invictus the god pagan cult imported from Syria a few decades earlier by Emperor Aurelian. Even eleven years after winning the battle Constantine murdered his already vanquished rival Licinius, former Emperor of the East, he then killed his wife by having her boiled alive in her bath, and his own son. [JE160].

Only when he was approaching death he asked for , Christian baptism. [JE 162].

In the West Christians began representing Jesus in the guise of the sun god Apollo, A portrait of Jesus illustrates him as a beardless Apollo-like youth , only the Chi-Rho monogram identifies him as Jesus. The concept of Jesus was far removed from that of a human Gentile Jew. [JE 162-3].

There was a bitter division between the *traditores* (traitors) who had betrayed their fellow Christians and offered pagan sacrifices and those who suffered mutilations for not doing so. There was also a deep division between Christians from Rome and those from Alexandria and from Antioch. In Alexandria Docetism, the concept that Jesus had existed as a spirit rather than a human had theoretically been stamped out. In Antioch the region which included the homeland of earthly Jesus, here as a different emphasis and outlook. There they stressed the oneness of God, the simple humanity of Jesus and the importance of the way of life Jesus taught

Constantine who has just won the eastern half of the empire found himself in the midst of a dispute between two rival groups of Christianity. So he summoned them to a 'World Council ' which was held in the summer of 325AD in Nicaea (today's Iznik) in north-western Turkey. (the Bishop of Rome excused himself as too old to travel). The point of issue was whether Jesus was a mere being brought in to existence to serve God's purpose , or whether he was God for all eternity , of one substance with the Father (as those in the West expressed it), and that he should not be less than God himself as the Alexandrians wanted. For Constantine who was theologically illiterate but politically superb manager, and he sided with the Alexandrians and Constantine urged all delegates to sign( those agreeing stayed as his guests for his 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, and those refusing were banished.

Alexandria was at the time one of the Empire's greatest cities, and had only recently been acquired by Constantine during his wars of reunification. Although the Alexandrians had arguably overstressed Jesus' divinity it would have been politically importunate for Constantine to alienate them by making an adverse theological decision in Nicaea.

What has really happened is that the Christians adopted a concept which contained not one jot of the ethical teachings of Jesus. Only after returning home the Bishops of Nicomedia and Chalcedon and Nicaea wrote to him saying that they " subscribed to a blasphemy from fear of you". Although no gospel regarded Jesus as God, not even Paul, the Jewish teacher had been declared *Very God* through all eternity and a whole new theology would flow from this. In fact Constantine in giving Christianity official status and securing its future, radically altered the founder's original intentions. [JE 164- 169].

Implication if Jesus was God then the Jews killed God. [JE 170].

### **The Nicene Creed**

(assembled by Constantine in Nicaea in 325 AD and reached its final form in 451 AD at the Council of Chalcedon when it was agreed by both Eastern and Western bishops that Jesus had been fully human and fully divine. This concept is to be found in no gospel. It derives from no recorded utterances of Jesus. Some of the remarks attributed to Jesus are in fact in direct contradiction to its message. [JE 11]

### **How MARY Became Mother of God:**

As a consequence a distortion took place with respect of the cult of Mary. In Constantine's days the interest in Mary was negligible, and even later in the fourth century church men such as Helvidius and Jovinian pointed out the clear gospel evidence that Mary had given birth to several children after Jesus. But the Alexandrian Didymus the Blind, and Hilary of Poitiers were in the process of bestowing on her the title "Ever Virgin". And now by proclaiming Jesus as Very God, it was only a matter of time before someone speculated on his mother's position. So in the year 431 just few miles from Nicaea the proposition was put to the Council of Ephesus that Mary should be entitled Theotokos-God bearing and thereby Mother of God. In 1854 Pope Pius IX he proclaimed Mary as 'immaculately conceived' that is from the moment of her conception of sin. A century later Pope Pius XII pronounced her 'Queen of Heaven'. [JE 170].

It is important to note that early tradition attests that the John gospel was written in Ephesus. During the classical period Ephesus was a cult center for the goddess Diana, and after Christianization it switched its allegiance to the cult of Virgin Mary. [JE IFC].

## **VII**

### **The Christianity that survived:**

After his death some members of the family including his mother (Acts 1:14) left Galilee and arrived in the Holy City. Among them one assumes was Jeshu's brother James (Galatians 1:19; Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18). Whether James immediately made a claim to his dead brother's succession or whether it was Peter who first put the idea in his head, we cannot know. But finally James did become the paramount head of the Nazarene Way in Jerusalem. Later Christian tradition referred to him as *Iakobos Iostos* (in Latin *Iustus*) an epithet taken to refer to his strictness in upholding the Israelite law.

Whatever the faith upheld by James and the apostles of the Nazarene Way may have been it was not the Christianity we know. Its preaching had its center in Jerusalem and Judea where the Nazarene way –along with the dynasty wielding leadership over it – vanished from existence in AD 135 three years after the suppression of the Second Jewish Revolt in Palestine.

Paul in his time did not approve the Jerusalem preaching. So ultimately it was the Christianity of Paul that survived but the memory of the old Nazarene way of Jerusalem was still there. In his own time Paul had fought its preaching but the fact remained that its apostles were the original followers of the master. Somehow the traditions they left behind had to be accommodated by the Christian canon after Paul's death. The Gospels of this canon as their text survive to the present day represent four different attempts to such accommodation. This is why they are so full of contradictions.

Paul's Christianity may be called apostolic Christianity.

In Arabia, as in Ethiopia, the triumph of apostolic Christianity over the older Nazarene faith must have begun in the fourth century, in the wake of the conversion of the Roman empire.

Paul's Jesus is a Jesus of faith with only the barest passing references to his human person as an Israelite, a follower of the law of Moses, and a scion of the House of David.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (137-140,62,63,65)**

### **Christian values:**

Early Christianity undermined the family, the unit of the social system, by teaching that celibacy is an exalted virtue; and by its emphasis on continence it directed the sexual impulse into physical and psychological perversions. It dogmatically relegated women to an inferior position, socially, politically and intellectually, and by making a sacrament of marriage it permitted wives to become chattels and husbands

boors. It supplanted courage and initiative by resignation: Providence had arranged things in their order, the rich and the poor, the well and the sick, the wise and the ignorant; and to question Providence was to question the wisdom of God. Misery was to be tolerated patiently in anticipation of everlasting glory. It did not highly esteem personal or political freedom, and in no case was it prepared to fight for them. By the fallacious philosophy of free will and the countersense of predestination, it obliterated education and experience from ethics and obstructed objective inquiry into the human mind. It rent philosophy by its dualisms of secular and holy, reason and faith, natural and supernatural, good and evil; and by its insistence that uniformed faith is a higher form of knowledge, that no earthly betterment could outweigh the overwhelming issue of salvation or damnation which awaited men after death, it paralyzed all curiosity and intelligent examination of the natural world. For the love of life it substituted the fear of death. For the sense of dignity of man, fundamental to the precepts of the Stoics and of Cicero, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius and other Roman moralists, it substituted the doctrine of personal inadequacy, the sense of guilt, and the habits of self doubt and self abnegation. In its cardinal doctrines of sin, for which it crucified the Christ, it promulgated a belief which was to crucify the whole of the western world for centuries to come. (HS 228)

#### **Distortion:**

##### **The Gospels**

Bultman this century's greatest new Testament theologian, with his new '*form criticism*' and by a series of deductions he concluded that what appears in the gospels was not what Jesus actually said and done but what Christians at least two generations removed had invented about him or had inferred what early preachers had told them. Other theologians also contributed and British and German research thinks that both Matthew and Luke in addition to drawing on Mark, must have used a second Greek source long lost and referred to by scholars as the Q (from German '*quelle*' meaning source) and they reconstructed it. [JE 39].

Some elements of the gospels suggest that the authors were far removed in time and distance from the original and authentic ring, others have strikingly authentic ring, which might suggest that a second generation altered first hand material. [JE 44]. For example in Mark 15 a Roman centurion is represented as the first man in history to recognize Jesus as divine. The entire Jewish establishment is represented as being out to kill Jesus while Pilate the Roman pleaded for his life. For Mark there could be one answer: to de-Judaize Jesus by representing him a reject of his own people. [JE 46].

Matthew also insists on the responsibility of the Jews for Jesus' death. At least according to one interpretation of events the Jewish revolt needs to be seen as a vital key to an understanding of how and when the canonical gospels came to be written. [JE 48].

#### **New Testament Letters:**

Recent computer tests have shown what theologians long suspected that whoever Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus was not the person (undisputedly Paul) who wrote Galatians, Romans and Corinthians. [JE 154].

#### **The Lost Gnostic:**

In 370 AD an unknown person trudged from what was probably the monastery of St Pachomius in Upper Egypt to bury the red earthenware jar that would be rediscovered as the Nag Hammadi hoard some 16 centuries later. Without doubt this represents a mere fraction of the lost Gnostic and other material. [JE172].

Equally neglected was the memory of a humble Jew called James, the true first head of the Church. [JE 173].

#### **Quarrels:**

The Jerusalem apostles did not consider Paul their equal and disapproved of his preaching. They opposed him for 17 years. He challenged James', Peter's & John's claim to religious leadership. (Galatians 2:6). And he denounced their teachings (Galatians 1:8-9). He didn't even acknowledge any role for them in his gospel which he said was revealed to him by Jesus.

He maintained that Gentiles could convert to Christianity without being subjected to circumcision and without having to obey the Israelite law as they insisted. When they finally reconciled after 24 years this did not result in the unification of their different preaching but only in a formal parting of ways in which each side promised to respect the independence of the other. (Galatians 2:6-10) Also it ended in Paul's agreeing to support them financially. But the damage was done. Rumors to disparage his mission were fabricated in Jerusalem for all those years and they

finally found their way into the book of Acts where they became immortalized mention of Paul's visit to Arabia was omitted and perhaps suppressed.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem 8,23,24, 31-32)**

### **Rivalry:**

First between James, the older of the Boanerges brothers (other than James Jeshu's brother), he was contested by Peter, then John Boanerges and that was after James was martyred. In fact he was the first martyr among the disciples. He was put to death by Herod, and imprisoned Peter who escaped "aided by an angel".

**(Conspiracy in Jerusalem, 131-137)**

### **Paul and James:**

That James was the brother of Jesus there can be no doubt. The Jewish historian Josephus, who was his contemporary, spoke of his execution in Jerusalem in AD 62 identifying him as "the brother of Jesus called Christ". Paul himself met James at least twice in Jerusalem disagreeing with him on both occasions on certainly on a major point of doctrine: whether or not Gentile converts to the new Christian faith should first be circumcised to become acceptable as Israelites. Acts in turn makes several references to James as the Jerusalem apostle who spoke with most authority and who was apparently deferred to as the leader of the community.

Paul's reference to James as the Lord's brother is in Galatians 1:15-23).

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (17-18, 25)**

### **Reconciliation between Paul and James:**

The Jerusalem opposition to Paul continued for fourteen years. When settlement was finally reached it did not result in unification of their different preaching but only in formal parting of ways in which each side promised to respect the independent of the other (Galatians 2:6-10). Ultimately the rumors about the conflict found their way into the book of Acts where they became immortalized as part of the Christian canon. Here the mention of Paul's visit to Arabia was omitted or perhaps deliberately suppressed.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (31-32)**

### **Discrepancies**

Almost from the moment of its inception, the Christian movement began to break up into sects over circumcision, marriage, taboos and contentious items in the creed, and with each schism it tended to lose its Jewish character by taking to itself pagan practices and beliefs. Its final pattern was determined not so much by the mystical doctrines which Paul bequeathed it as by the legends, dogma and organization which it acquired in the first three or four centuries of its development. It grew by absorbing competing theological ideas.

New testament discrepancies are too frequently intentional and were obviously made by persons who had new matter to insert and felt themselves free to take any liberties they chose... most of these interpolations were made in the second and third centuries. **(HS 181)**

### **Paganism:**

Between its inception and its final establishment, the syncretic growth of Christianity was so much in evidence that its sponsors were frequently hard pressed to explain the parallels between its doctrines and rituals and those of the pagans, especially the Mithraists. The Mithraic priests baptized that god's devotees with holy water, signed them on their foreheads, transferred the holy spirit to them by the 'laying on of hands' and exorcised devils by holding two or more fingers directed towards the suppliant.

The cross, the pine tree of Adonis and the crux ansata of the Egyptians were carved upon the grave to ward off evil demons and the manual sign was freely used to protect the living against misfortune and disease. Tertullian reports that, 'At every step, at every movement, at every coming in and going out, in putting on our clothes and our shoes, in the bath, at table in the evening, lying down or sitting, whatever attitude we assume, we mark our foreheads with a little sign of the cross.' **(HS 199)**

The initial success of Christianity was in great measure attributable to its capacity to borrow pagan customs and beliefs; its greatest difficulty in its first four centuries lay in integrating these customs and beliefs with Judaic theology into an organized, coherent body of doctrine. **(HS 212)**

For more than six centuries Judaism had condemned the worship of idols, but images of Jesus and Mary, and even of the more illustrious saints, easily passed this traditional veto and rapidly came to play a role in Christian worship equivalent to the sacred statues of the pagans... By the sixth century all Christian temples had statues which spoke, wept, perspired or bled, these prodigies being officially approved... The chief difference between the Christian and pagan idols was that in place of the great stone sculptures of the past the Christians, lacking any artistic tradition or training, used painted wooden images or pictures of the crudest sort. (HS 217)

The transfer from pagan to Christian worship represented but little change. The statues of Jupiter and Apollo were readily christened St. Peter and St. Paul, and by the middle of the fifth century Christianity had acquired numerous pagan deities as saints. Osiris was sanctified as St. Onuphris, Mithra (Peter) as St. Peter, Cheron as St. Ceraunos, Castor and Pollux as St. Cosmo and St. Darnieu, Diana Illythra as St. Yllis, Artemis as St. Artemidos, Dionysus as St. Dionysus and also as St. Bacchus; Demetrius, Rusticus, Denis and Eleutherius, some of these deities having been appropriated on the pretense that they were martyrs were sanctified, while Buddha, quite by accident, was canonized as St. Josaphat. ... The principle of sacrifice and propitiation were preserved, there was nothing unfamiliar in penance and atonement, and, with the adoration of shrines, sacred relics and images, the resort to emotionally titillating mysteries and the absorption and renaming of pagan festivals and holy places, the conversion of the Mediterranean world did not prove difficult. (HS 227)

### **Barbarism:**

Many reasons have been given for the 'fall' of the Roman empire, most of them but partial answers or mere guesses. Be the true causes what they may, it was not in the nature of the faith to oppose the process of disintegration. At the opening of the Christian era, there had been schools in every considerable town, and many advanced academies in the great cities; these the Christians gradually allowed to die out, maintaining only a few theological seminaries... The temple schools of Asklepios had been shut and public lecturing by nonofficial teachers had been practically prohibited in Rome and Constantinople in the fourth century. Under the edict of Theodosius, Bishop Theophilus in 389 destroyed the Serapeum in Alexandria, and with it nearly all the works in the only remaining pagan library of importance in the world. In 529, Justinian closed the schools at Athens, the last to teach Greek philosophy, and the intensity of this emperor's persecutions brought about within a short space of time the baptism of 70,000 in Asia Minor alone, and so alienated the population of Egypt and Syria that the way was paved for the spread of Mohammedanism. The Christians preferred prayer and exorcism to pagan magic, religious to geometric theorems, the gospels to any other literature. So fallible was reason held that Pope Gregory the great (540-604) condemned all literature and intellectual effort, and in the East the laity were forbidden to read even the sacred book. (HS 228)

In later centuries, the Christians accused the Saracens of cruelty and bloodiness, but in their own missionary work they set a ruthless example... Charlemagne decreed that any who rejected baptism should be put to death... It required two centuries of warfare to Christianize Scandinavia, and almost as long to spread the light across Middle Europe.

The cost of Christianizing the whole of Europe is estimated at from eight to ten million lives, while the necessarily late introduction of Christianity into the New World was to cost twelve million native lives and utterly destroy the civilization of the Aztecs and the Incas. (HS 251)

## **VIII**

### **Paul**

#### **Paul's Gospel Was His Invention**

The Gospel Paul preached, he claimed, was the "authentic one" because it was "not of human origin". He said "it was Jesus Christ himself who revealed it to me". (Galatians 1:11-12).

Jerusalem (24-25)

**Conspiracy in**

**Paul's Writings:**

They are older than the oldest known Gospels. Paul did not believe all the stories about Jesus circulated in his time by the apostles in Jerusalem.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem 7,34**

**Preaching Career of Paul:**

Paul wrote that God "chose me even before I was born...and when he decided to reveal his Son to me, that I might preach the Good News about him to the Gentiles I did not go to anyone for advice, nor did I go to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before me. Instead I went at once to Arabia, and then I returned to Damascus. It was three years later that I went to Jerusalem to obtain information from Peter, and I stayed with him for two weeks". (Galatians 1:15-23). Paul did not visit Jerusalem again until fourteen years later. (Galatians 2:1)

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (25,27)**

**Paul is Confused with Saul**

Acts despite a fundamental unity of style indicating a single authorship, actually puts together two different categories of information about the career of Paul. An indirect one (second hand) and a direct one (first hand). *Possibly Acts confuses the identity of Paul with Saul.* What the book of Acts says about Paul is not entirely correct. Paul says something about him while Acts says something else. In fact the book of Acts is a continuation of one of the Gospels, that of Luke. The author of Acts was also the author of Luke and this author spoke profusely of the life and career of Jesus, as the other Gospel authors did while Paul said so little about the subject.

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem (15-17,22)**

**Paul's Death:**

Whether or not Paul was executed, nothing is known about him after about AD 62. It is generally assumed that he was put to death in Rome in the course of Christian persecution which marked the reign of Nero (AD 54-68).

**Conspiracy in Jerusalem ( 9)**

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| <b>Paul's Gospel Was His Invention</b> | <b>80</b> |
| <b>Paul's Writings</b>                 | <b>81</b> |
| <b>Preaching Career of Paul</b>        | <b>81</b> |
| <b>Paul is Confused with Saul</b>      | <b>81</b> |
| <b>Paul's Death</b>                    | <b>82</b> |